

Intimation of any future Indian records of this bird, as well as skins of it, will be welcomed by the Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta.

CALCUTTA,
10th April, 1941.

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XI.—BIRD 'BATHING' IN ANTS.

I wonder if the following note on the 'anting' habit of the Common Mynah will be interesting to the readers of your esteemed *Journal*.

On the morning of December 14, 1940, I saw a pair of Common Mynahs (*Acridotheres tristis*) 'anting' themselves on the lawn in front of the Museum. The birds were seen to hop about in the midst of a colony of Red Ants (*Oecophylla smaragdina*) picking them in their beaks one after the other, rubbing them against the underparts of their wings and tail and finally dropping them. After being thus engaged for about three minutes, they flew away. On the scene of their activities, I found a number of red ants strewn about, dead and dying. All had their abdomens flexed and crushed at the pedicel and were reeking of formic acid recently liberated.

Again, on June 28, 1941, at the same spot, I saw a pair of mynahs engaged in the same act. This time I had noticed the birds at a distance feeding among the grass and working their way in the direction of the ants. As my curiosity was roused, I took my stand nearby to watch. On seeing the ants they at once set to pick them up in their beaks and behave exactly as before, spreading and quivering the tail during the act. They did this for nearly a minute and then moved on. Soon, a pair of White-headed Babblers (*Turdoides striatus*) feeding in another part of lawn came that way, but took no notice of the ants, and hopped clear of them to the adjoining lawn. I made an examination of the spot as soon as the birds had left, but there was no sign of the shambles I expected to see, save for a disabled ant which I removed to my table. Under a lens, the legs appeared intact and though the abdomen was bent over on its stalk, it was free from rupture and presented no trace of any body juice. At first the ant could hardly move, but soon it recovered and was able to get about as vigorously as ever, so I had it restored to its comrades.

According to the notes previously published on the subject in this *Journal*, the following birds have been observed to pick up and press on their plumage insects with obnoxious effluvia:—

(1) *Dryonastes coerulatus* and the nestlings of *Trochalo-pterum nigrimentum* and *erythrocephalum*, *Dendrocitta baylei*, (Rhynchota)—B. B. Osmaston.

- (2) Jerdon's Chloropsis—(Red Ants)—Humayun Abdulali.
 (3) Song thrush—(Red Ants)—Major R. S. P. Bates.
 (4) Drongo—(Ants—Red?)—T. B. Fletcher.

In all the above cases, the insects were swallowed afterwards, but in (3), as well as in the instances described above, the birds were observed to drop them.

Besides these, the Magpie (*Pica pica*), Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), the crow (*Corvus corone* and *cornix*), *Leiothrix lutea*, *Lioptila capistrata* and *Garrulus* species, the Thrushes (*Turdus musicus* and *philomelos*) and Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) are also known to indulge in this habit, using in addition to ants, cigar ends, mealworms and Floh-Kerbs (?) and many acid fluids such as lemon juice and vinegar.

TRIVANDRUM,

August 12, 1941.

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XII.—SURVIVAL OF BIRDS AFTER INJURY.

Mr. W. P. Keelan's note in this *Journal* (Vol. xlii, No. 1, p. 191) on a Mallard which lost portions of the web and toes, the latter being mere stumps, the cause of which he attributes to frost-bite or a jaw-trap, reminds me of the injuries to one of my pets, a Baya (*Ploceus philippinus*), which survived in spite of the total loss of a leg.

Early in 1940 I was living in a small village, but the house I was occupying was comparatively good as it was the property of the State. One morning one of my pets, a bulbul, was missing. I found its feathers under its cage which lay on a shelf. The cage had a wire netting, but the door had a slit $\frac{1}{2}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches and I suspected the marauder had dragged out its victim through this slit, but left the other bulbuls untouched. Worried for the safety of my other pets, I took them to another room. I was afraid the unknown visitor might come from the roof, so I placed the half a dozen cages on a cot until better arrangement could be made. My pets included parrakeets, bulbuls, munias, larks, a pair of koels, a grey partridge, a Nepal mynah and a cockatoo. Nothing untoward happened for some days. Then one night I was awakened by the alarmed twittering and calls of my birds. My wife and I rushed to the room which had no access to cats. We shuddered at the horrible carnage we saw in one of the cages occupied by White-backed Munias, Spotted Munias, Red Amadavats, larks and a baya. The victims were bleeding profusely. Some were already dead, some were dying. A pair of Spotted Munias was unscathed. The baya had lost its left leg entirely. Nothing was left of its leg except a blood clot on the belly. No time was lost to reach and search the room, but no trace of the enemy was found. Wire-mesh of the cage hardly allowed entry of the tip of one's first finger. The cage measured $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{3}{4}$ ft. Near the top of the cage, on one side, some feathers were clinging and there were blood stains indicating where the enemy had unsuccessfully tried to draw out